

Town of Harpswell

P.O. Box 39

Harpswell, ME 04079

April 8, 2010

Dr. Michael Wilhelm
Superintendent, M.S.A.D. 75
50 Republic Avenue
Topsham, ME 04086

Dear Mike,

First, thank you for the open and well-managed public hearing on the West Harpswell School closure issue. It was informative and provided a great opportunity for all voices to be heard.

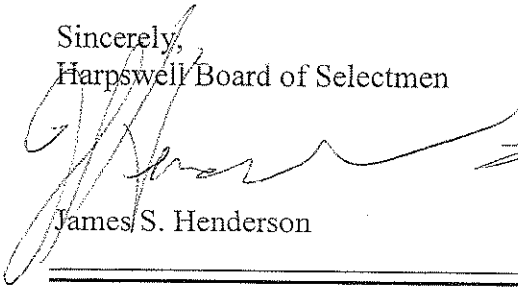
However, we want to express our profound disappointment in finding out, only after the vote on the West Harpswell School, that the District had reason to believe Harpswell's assessment for the District in 2010 would decline even if the West Harpswell School remained open. The Town Administrator and Select Board Chair first learned of this at the March 16th meeting of the District Board and town officials.

Clearly, that information could have had an affect on the vote. For some voters, the primary issue was one of preventing a tax increase, to which this information was very relevant. The spreadsheets, prepared by the District's Business Manager, estimating the assessments for all member towns, including Harpswell, were dated February 23rd (two days before the public hearing) and March 8th, 2010 (the day before the March 9th election), so it is our impression that the assessment information was available prior to the vote. Notwithstanding the fact that the information was based, to some degree, on potentially changing data, we feel strongly that the District should have made a point to pass this information along to the Town.


Realizing that the issue of the status of the West Harpswell School and, given the current trends, perhaps the status of other District schools, is likely to come up once again, and in the interest of keeping voters fully informed prior to any future vote on the issue of school closure, whether in Harpswell or in another District town, we ask that the town involved be apprised of the latest estimates of local assessments as far in advance of any referendum as possible. This will assure local voters of the maximum opportunity to determine where their best interests may lie.

Thanks for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,
Harpswell Board of Selectmen


James S. Henderson


Mark E. Wallace


Elinor Multer